



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6711th meeting

Saturday, 4 February 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Menan	(Togo)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 11:50 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first meeting of the Council for the month of February 2012, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of January 2012. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Sangqu and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2012/77, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Azerbaijan, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

China, Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 13 votes in favour and two against. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of two permanent members of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to offer Morocco's congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month. Similarly, our great appreciation goes to Ambassador Baso Sangqu and his delegation for their presidency of the Council last month.

I wish to express my delegation's great regret and disappointment over the Council's failure to adopt the draft resolution (S/2012/77) we submitted three days ago, as well as our sincere hope that the Council's failure will not serve as a pretext for further dangerous backsliding in the humanitarian situation in brotherly Syria and increased innocent civilian casualties.

It should be recalled that in their recent presentations to the Council (see S/PV.6710), Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Chairman of the current session of the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States, and Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, made a clear and urgent request for the Council's support of the regional organization's bold, decisive and comprehensive initiative based on dialogue, mutual understanding and national reconciliation, aimed at achieving a peaceful solution for a situation that has only continued to worsen with time.

In assuming its responsibility as the Arab member of the Security Council and in close cooperation with other States members and non-members of the Council, in particular many of the Arab countries, Morocco, almost a year after the start of the crisis in brotherly Syria, continues to work to achieve consensus in order to enable the Council to speak with a single voice.

Morocco highly appreciates the initiative of all the Council members that joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution. I refer to the Council's unanimous response to the proposals made by one of its members. We duly appreciate the spirit of consensus and

flexibility reflected in the draft resolution, of which members are well aware.

Through our efforts, we have endeavoured to live up to the firm principles demanding an immediate and complete end to all hostilities and acts of violence, and to encourage political dialogue in order to enable the Syrian people to establish its national political institutions, preserve Syria's territorial integrity and social, pluralistic unity and, equally important, to forestall any external military intervention. Now that the Council has failed to reach a decision to support the Arab initiative, the road map remains the only tool as an exemplary framework for implementation by the League of Arab States.

We are terribly pained by the horrendous events unfolding before us. We ask God to bless all the victims without exception, and we call for the bloodshed to end and for all factions of the Syrian people to establish a democratic State and open a single, unified society enjoying understanding and harmony. We hope that the Security Council will not have to address the situation yet again, although it seems to be deteriorating. We hope that now that the Council has been unable to reach decision, all those who have leverage with the parties will spare no effort to ensure that no further innocent victims are claimed and that the violence and counter-violence will come to an end.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): It is with great sadness and concern that I note the exercise today of a double veto against a draft resolution on Syria that had been supported by all other members of the Council. This is a sad day for the Council; it is a sad day for the Syrians; and it is sad day for all the friends of democracy.

Above and beyond the thousands of dead, wounded, tortured and imprisoned since the repression began almost a year ago, history has compounded our shame because today is the anniversary of the Hama massacre and falls only one day after another massacre in Homs. The father killed on a mass scale; the son has followed in his footsteps. Horror would seem to be hereditary in Damascus.

We have been discussing Syria for 10 months, and all we have managed to adopt is a mere presidential statement on 3 August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16) because of the exercise of the veto,

exercised in October by the same members, of a text that was as moderate as today's.

What has happened over these past 10 months? More than 6,000 Syrians have fallen victim to repression, and the situation could well be worse than we know. Ten days ago, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay told us that she was no longer able to count the victims of repression. The Secretary-General has called tirelessly on the Council to act to stop the crimes against humanity being committed in Syria. And the Council has remained silent.

The Human Rights Council has thrice noted the overwhelming responsibility of the Syrian regime, and the Security Council has remained silent.

Some 133 members of the General Assembly have solemnly condemned these criminal acts and called for an immediate end to them. And the Council has remained silent.

Only three days ago in this very Chamber (see S/PV.6710), the League of Arab States called on the Council to support its action in the face of the Syrian regime's refusal to listen and the implications of that refusal for the entire region. The Secretary-General of the Arab League and the Prime Minister of Qatar called here for a solution that is the only credible road to a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis. A draft resolution that was submitted by Morocco, broadly co-sponsored within and outside the Council, and deemed by most to be consensual, offered the Council's support for regional efforts — nothing more, nothing less — and yet the Council will remain silent.

We cannot and must not overlook the harrowing conclusion that two permanent members of the Council have systematically obstructed all its action. They do so in the full knowledge of the tragic consequences of their decisions for the Syrian people. And in so doing, they are making themselves complicit in the policy of repression being implemented by the Damascus regime. Whatever they may claim, they have de facto taken the side of the Al-Assad regime against the Syrian people.

I know the arguments that will be made by those who today opposed the Council's action. I have already heard them say that only a few more days would have sufficed for us to reach an agreement. How can one speak of a few more days when hundreds of Syrians

are dying every day? We could wait no longer, especially as the draft resolution represents the broadest possible consensus of the international community in support of the efforts of regional actors to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

For the past 10 months, we have been accused of seeking regime change and preparing for military intervention. That is patently false. We have fully answered those concerns. In this Chamber three days ago, our Ministers confirmed that there was no question of imposing a political regime on Syria. On that point and on the issue of armed intervention, the draft resolution was crystal clear. How much time have we squandered responding to these debating points? The procrastination, scheming and hesitancy are not commensurate with the tragedy being experienced by the Syrian people.

History will judge harshly those countries that have prevented the Council from offering its support to the courageous efforts of the Arab League to implement its plan. In so doing, they have without scruple aligned themselves with a regime slaughters its own people. In so doing, they have judged that their presence in the Middle East now depends on the future of the Al-Assad. That presence and that regime will endure the same fate.

As I said, today is sad day. But we will not stop here. We have no right to abandon the Syrian people to its tragic fate. I tell the Syrians that France will continue to work in all forums and with all partners that share its values towards the objective that should have united us here today – an end to the Syrian nightmare. We will continue to work with the Arab League, whose plan remains on the table even though it has not been endorsed by the Council. We will continue to support the peaceful Syrian opposition that is rallying around the Syrian National Council. We will continue to up the pressure by imposing further sanctions of the European Union.

I save my final word for the Syrian people, who with untold courage have kept their eyes on the prize of future freedom for the past 10 months. From this Chamber, I offer them France's full support and resolve relentlessly to pursue our action. We weathered a first double veto and returned to the Council; today, we have weathered a second on the part of the same countries. However, for the sake of the principles that guide the Council and the work of the United Nations,

and for the sake of our responsibility as a permanent members, that will not stop us.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Germany and the overwhelming majority of Council members supported the draft resolution that was submitted by Morocco on behalf of the Arab States. However, two permanent members of the Council chose to exercise their veto. That is to say that, after more than 11 months of brutal violence and repression by the Syrian Government; after more than 5,500 deaths; after the killing of almost 400 children; and after far too many peaceful protesters have been detained, tortured, raped and abused, today the Security Council again failed to assume its responsibilities and to live up to its mandate to maintain international peace and security.

In short, the people of Syria and the region have been let down again, and that is a crying shame even more so in the light of the recent massacres in Homs, even more so in the light of one the bloodiest days of the Arab Spring; and even more so on the tragic thirtieth anniversary of the Hama massacre. And that is the real scandal.

Germany's position is very clear. The Council should urge Al-Assad to stop the killing. His regime has to put an immediate end to the violence. It has to stop the massive, gross and systematic violation of human rights. That was the first major element of the draft resolution before us (S/2012/77).

Many of the demands expressed in the draft resolution were actually accepted by the Syrian Government on 19 December 2011. The Syrian Government agreed to the cessation of violence, to the release of all political prisoners, to the withdrawal of its armed forces, and to the unhindered freedom of movement of observers and journalists. According to the League of Arab States, however, none of those commitments was fully met by the Syrian Government.

Last Tuesday, this Council heard a remarkable plea by the League of Arab States (see S/PV.6710). The Arab States urged the Council not to let the Syrian people down; they urged the members of the Council to support them in resolving the crisis in Syria. That was the second major element of our draft resolution – to answer the call from Arab States and large parts of the international community to fully support the initiative of the League of Arab States, which is aimed at finding a political, Syrian-led solution to the crisis. That was the call of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution did not foresee an arms embargo or a sanctions regime, as we had wished for, nor did it mandate a commission of inquiry into human rights violations, as we had advocated. We regret that it did not, but we negotiated in a spirit of compromise, and we were ready to make substantial concessions. The draft also did not call for regime change, as some maintained. What it did, however, was to support a political framework set out by the League of Arab States. That framework is intended to facilitate a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic and plural political system, because that is what it is all about — to have the Syrian people itself decide on its own political future. That is the way for peace and security to best be achieved, in Syria and beyond. And that is what the majority here in the Council agrees upon. We regret that two Council members disagreed.

The violence in Syria has to stop. A political dialogue has to begin under the auspices of the League of Arab States. There is a political way out of this crisis. We are afraid, however, that today's decision will spur further violence and make it harder to reach a political solution. Nevertheless, Germany will continue to work with all partners in the region to support the League of Arab States.

As much as we regret today's decision, let me reassure members of the Council that Germany remains ready to work with all of them to overcome our division and to bridge the gaps. We owe that not only to the Syrian people, but also to the mandate of this Council, which is the maintenance of peace and security.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): The United States is disgusted that a couple of members of this Council continue to prevent us from fulfilling our sole purpose here, which is to address an ever-deepening crisis in Syria and a growing threat to regional peace and security. For months, this Council has been held hostage by a couple of members. Those members stand behind empty arguments and individual interests, while delaying and seeking to strip bare any text that would pressure Al-Assad to change his actions. That intransigence is even more shameful when we consider that at least one of those members continues to deliver weapons to Al-Assad.

The United States has long said that it is past time for the Council to assume its responsibilities and to impose tough, targeted sanctions and an arms embargo

on the Al-Assad regime, as many individual countries have already done. But today's draft resolution (S/2012/77) did not even do that. The text simply supported an Arab League plan that Al-Assad himself already agreed to uphold and the subsequent Arab League decision towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The sponsors of the draft resolution truly went the last mile to try to reach consensus on a draft that already more than accommodates the concerns of a few Council members about the use of force and sanctions. Subsequent attempts today to introduce wrecking amendment's at the eleventh hour, only to further delay Council action, are unforgivable.

Since yesterday, the Syrian Government has waged and intensified an especially horrific campaign in Homs to murder hundreds, including women and children, with artillery, tanks and other indiscriminate violence. Syrian forces continue to prevent hundreds of innocent and injured civilians from seeking medical help. The international community must protect the Syrian people from that abhorrent brutality. But a couple of members of this Council remain steadfast in their willingness to sell out the Syrian people and to shield a craven tyrant.

The United States, by contrast, stands fully and irrevocably with the long-suffering people of Syria.

Since those same two Council members vetoed the last draft resolution on Syria, we have heard reports from the High Commissioner for Human Rights that the regime may be committing crimes against humanity. We also heard from Arab League Secretary-General Elaraby and from Qatari Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, who noted that the Assad regime has "failed to make any serious effort to cooperate" (see *SPV.6710*, p.4) with the Arab League and that Assad's "killing machine continues effectively unabated" (*ibid.*, p.5).

Since those two members last vetoed a draft resolution on Syria, an estimated 3,000 more civilians have been killed, with another almost 250 killed just yesterday. Many thousands more have been held captive and tortured by Al-Assad and his Shabia gangs. Since those two members last vetoed a resolution, however, and despite the absence of Security Council action, we have seen more and more Syrians speak out in peaceful demonstrations against the regime.

Once again, the courageous people of Syria can clearly see who on this Council supports their yearning

for liberty and universal rights and who does not. And during this season of change, the people of the Middle East can now see clearly which nations have chosen to ignore their calls for democracy and instead to prop up desperate dictators. Those who oppose the draft resolution have denied this last chance to end Al-Assad's brutality through peaceful means under Arab League auspices. Any further bloodshed will be on their hands.

The Governments that once again stymied Council action today need to reverse course and to heed the voices of the Syrian people — for their own sake, for the sake of Syria, for the sake of the Middle East, and for the sake of this Council.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): This is indeed a sad day for the Security Council. Once again, it was unable to act to send a forceful and united message to the Syrian authorities to stop killing and torturing their people, even though in the recent hours hundreds more have been killed.

How long will this Council allow the Syrian killing machine to continue to push the country into a bloody sectarian conflict? How many more dead and maimed will it take to finally force this Council into action? It is indeed regrettable and particularly worrying that the Security Council was unable to unanimously support the decision of the League of Arab States of 22 January to facilitate a political transition to a democratic, pluralistic political system in which all Syrians are equal, regardless of their affiliations or ethnicity or beliefs, and are de facto citizens of their country.

A Syrian-led political transition based on a serious political dialogue between the Syrian Government and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition: that is exactly what those who did not support this resolution today had been demanding.

The Security Council was unable to respond to the plea of the League of Arab States that it support the Arab world's attempt to end the killing and reach a peaceful political solution to the Syrian crisis — two goals that are, I believe, shared by all on this Council. Yet again the Council has failed to meet its responsibilities towards the Syrian people and to fulfil its role as the primary body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Not only is this extremely disappointing, it is simply unacceptable.

As was made perfectly clear in this Council last Tuesday, the situation in Syria is untenable and is rapidly spiraling towards civil war. Clear and unanimous support by this Council for the efforts of the Arab League is essential if we are to counter such a dangerous development. It was made abundantly clear in this Chamber that this draft resolution was not about regime change, nor did it seek to impose changes on Syria from outside, much less to allow for the use of force or impose sanctions. The sole objective of this resolution was to put an immediate end to the violence and enable a Syrian-owned political dialogue that would allow the Syrian people to determine their own future peacefully.

As my minister stated here earlier this week (see S/PV.6710), we fully support the efforts of the League of Arab States regarding Syria, including its decision of 22 January 2012 and the political road map therein. They represent the only viable way to solve this crisis peacefully, through political means.

Portugal remains fully committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Syria. We urge all parties in Syria to immediately halt all violence and engage in a serious political dialogue under the auspices of the League of Arab States. Portugal will continue to work actively with the Arab League towards the fulfilment of these objectives.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is appalled by the decision of Russia and China to veto an otherwise consensus resolution, submitted by Morocco, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, Portugal, Colombia, Togo, Libya, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Tunisia, Oman and Turkey.

It has been 10 months since the Syrian people bravely demanded their universal rights, and 10 months since the Syrian regime responded by violently repressing and killing its own people.

Six months ago the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/16) condemning the widespread violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities. It called for an immediate end to violence and compliance with obligations under international law, and for the Syrian Government to implement its stated commitments to reform. On that day, the death toll in

Syria stood at approximately one thousand. But the Syrian regime only continued its brutal repression.

Four months ago, two Council members vetoed an attempt to send a clear message to the Syrian regime to end the bloodshed. That day, the death toll stood at three thousand, and the Syrian regime only continued its brutal repression.

The death toll today stands at around six thousand. The Syrian regime has ferociously escalated its already brutal repression in the last 24 hours, subjecting the citizens of Homs to artillery and heavy weaponry. The death toll will be high. Those who blocked Council action today must ask themselves how many more deaths they are prepared to tolerate before they support even modest and measured action.

Last Tuesday, this Council and the world heard from His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani of Qatar and from the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (see S/PV.6710). They came with a simple request for Security Council support for the Arab League's plan to facilitate a political transition and bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The original Moroccan draft resolution did just that. From the outset it had support from the vast majority of Council members and had the backing of the Arab League.

Yet some Council members argued that the draft resolution imposed regime change. It said no such thing. But in an attempt to reach consensus, we provided further assurances in the text. The same minority argued that the text could somehow be used to authorize military intervention. It did no such thing. It was a Chapter VI resolution. But in an attempt to reach consensus, we provided further assurances in the text. The same minority argued that very modest language expressing concern about weapons was somehow tantamount to an arms embargo. It was not. But we took it out. They said that mere mention of Arab League sanctions was tantamount to United Nations sanctions. It was not. But we took it out in an effort to reach consensus.

The facts speak for themselves. There is nothing in this text that should have triggered a veto. We removed every possible excuse. The reality is that Russia and China have today made a choice to turn their backs on the Arab world and the support tyranny rather than the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. They have failed in their responsibility as

permanent members of the Security Council, and they have done so on the most shameful of days of the Syrian killing machine's three hundred days of oppression.

The United Kingdom will continue to support the Arab League's efforts to bring about a peaceful transition in Syria. We shall continue to support the brave Syrian people in their demands for change. The regime must cease the violence. There must now be a transition to a new political dispensation. Should the regime continue on its current bloody trajectory, we will once again bring the issue back to this Council, in consultation with our colleagues in the Arab League.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Colombia, I wish to state my disappointment and regret at the outcome of the vote, which denies the member countries of the League of Arab States, and this Organization itself, the support that has been requested of us for a plan intended to bring an end to the tragedy being experienced in Syria and to defend the lives and rights of the people of that country.

Since the beginning of the violent repression by the Syrian Government of the civilian population more than ten months ago, we have made many attempts, many appeals to find a solution to the crisis. The response has been a continuous escalation of the brutal use of force and the violation of all the human rights of the people of that country.

Throughout this process we have engaged in ongoing dialogue with the Arab countries. We always took into account their guidance and requests to permit and facilitate Arab League action before the Council took a decision. This was done until their efforts were no longer responded to, and they specifically requested, last week, that this Council support their political transition plan in order to achieve peace and establish a democratic regime in Syria.

Colombia supported and voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Morocco in response to the request formally presented to the Council by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (see S/PV.6710), convinced that the Syrian people must be rescued from the terrible tragedy that they are suffering today.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our position on the situation in Syria was fully

explained by our Minister for Foreign Affairs last Tuesday in the Chamber (see S/PV.6710).

Our prime objective is to help to put an end to the spiral of violence afflicting the Syrian population and to find a political solution to the crisis experienced by that country. We believe that the League of Arab States has adopted an initiative that meets both goals (see S/2012/71, annex). We therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution just put before us (S/2012/77).

We regret that our vote was in vain owing to the very particular voting system that governs our decision-making process. That adds to the ranks of those affected by this matter — not only the victims of the violence, whom, I underscore, are our prime concern, but also the effectiveness of the Security Council in adequately responding to the challenges facing it.

In conclusion, our delegation deeply regrets that we have failed to meet the request made of us by the League of Arab States. We urge its member countries to persevere in its initiatives, including that of 22 January.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I want to start by congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. My delegation and I look forward to working with you to make your presidency truly successful. In an earlier incarnation, I had the opportunity to have visited your beautiful country. I would also like to take this opportunity to complement South Africa, Ambassador Baso Sangqu and his team for their wise and able stewardship of the Council in January.

The Syrian Arab Republic has historically played an important role in the Middle East. Prolonged instability and unrest in Syria have implications for peace and stability in the wider region. India is concerned about the present situation in Syria, which has resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians and security forces personnel over the past 10 months. Therefore, since the beginning of the protest, we have called for a peaceful and inclusive political process to address the grievances of all sections of Syrian society.

We strongly condemn all violence, irrespective of the perpetrators. We also condemn all violations of human rights. India holds the rights of expression and peaceful assembly among the fundamental values that should be respected, while ensuring the stability and

security of society. India has conveyed that message to the Syrian leadership, both bilaterally and with our partners Brazil and South Africa. We have impressed upon the Syrian side to abjure violence and pay heed to the aspirations of the people of Syria. That message was also contained in the presidential statement issued by the Council in August 2011 under India's presidency (S/PRST/2011/16).

We are firmly of the view that a political process for the resolution of the present crisis should be led by the Syrians themselves. We believe that the main role of the international community, including the Council, is to facilitate engagement of the Syrian people with all sections of Syrian society for an inclusive political process that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians, while ensuring respect for the country's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

We note that the draft resolution enjoins the Government to protect its population, indicating that it should have the capacity to do so. The League of Arab States is an important regional organization and should play its required and historic role in promoting political dialogue among the Syrian parties.

In that context, we welcome the deployment of the League's observer mission across several areas of the country, which had a calming effect on the level of violence and provided a more accurate picture of developments. We hope that the mission can return soon.

Our support for today's draft resolution is in accordance with our support for the efforts of the Arab League for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. We note that the draft resolution expressly rules out any measures under Article 42 of the Charter and calls for a serious political dialogue between the Syrian Government and the whole spectrum of the opposition under the auspices of the League of Arab States.

We believe that the leadership of Syria is a matter for the Syrian people to decide. It would be necessary for all opposition forces in Syria to peacefully engage in constructive dialogue with the authorities. We hope that that would create a new environment for peace and facilitate a political process. That political dialogue should build upon the political reforms already announced by the Syrian leadership, with the necessary changes for them to find acceptance among all sections of Syrian society.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The bloodshed and violence in Syria must be immediately ended. To that end, the Russian Federation has undertaken active diplomatic efforts in contacts with the Syrians, Syria's Arab neighbours and other members of the international community. Today, it was announced in Moscow that, on instructions from President Medvedev of the Russian Federation, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Lavrov and the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, Mr. Fradkov, are to visit Damascus on 7 February for a meeting with President Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In the Security Council, we have actively tried to reach a decision for an objective solution that would truly help to put a prompt end to violence and start a political process in Syria. The decision of the Security Council should be just that, but from the very beginning of the Syrian crisis some influential members of the international community, including some sitting at this table, have undermined any possibility of a political settlement, calling for regime change, encouraging the opposition towards power, indulging in provocation and nurturing the armed struggle.

The work of the Security Council was not taken to its conclusion. The draft resolution put to the vote (S/2012/77) did not adequately reflect the true state of affairs in Syria and sent a biased signal to the Syrian sides. The sponsors of the draft resolution did not take into account our proposed amendments to the draft resolution to the effect that the Syrian opposition must distance itself from extremist groups that are committing acts of violence, and calling on States and all those with any relevant opportunity to use their influence to stop those groups committing acts of violence. Nor has account been taken of our proposals that along with the withdrawal of the Syrian armed forces from the cities, there should be an end to attacks by armed groups on State institutions and neighbourhoods. Nor has there been support for the proposal to show more flexibility for the intermediary efforts of the League of Arab States, which would increase the chances for the success of an inclusive Syrian political process.

Under these conditions, the Russian delegation voted against the draft resolution submitted. We greatly regret such an outcome of our joint work in the Security Council. We believe that intensive efforts by

the international community will be continued, with a view to an immediate end to the violence and a successful beginning and conclusion of an inclusive Syrian political process and to withdrawal of that country from a profound crisis.

Russia, for its part, will continue to work precisely in that direction.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council has just voted on the draft resolution on Syria (S/2012/77), and China voted against it.

China has, all along, followed closely the developments in Syria. We call on all parties in Syria to stop the violence and in particular to avoid casualties among innocent civilians, to restore order in the country as soon as possible and to respect the request of the Syrian people for reform and for the safeguarding of their own interests. This is in the fundamental interest of Syria and its people. We support the good-offices efforts of the Arab League to resolve the Syrian crisis so as to promote an early launch of an inclusive political process led by the Syrian people and in which all parties extensively participate, to peacefully resolve differences and disputes through dialogue and negotiations, and to restore stability in Syria.

The international community should provide constructive assistance to help achieve these goals. At the same time, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria should be fully respected. The actions of the Security Council on the Syrian issue should comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and help ease the tensions, help promote political dialogue and diffuse disputes, and help maintain peace and stability in the Middle East region, rather than complicate the issue.

Under these principles, China participated actively in the consultations on the draft resolution and supported the efforts of the Arab League to facilitate a political settlement of the Syrian issue and to maintain stability in the region. Like many Council members, China maintains that under the current circumstances, to put undue emphasis on pressuring the Syrian Government for a prejudged result of the dialogue or to impose any solution will not help resolve the Syrian issue. Instead, that may further complicate the situation.

China supports the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation and has noted that the Russian Foreign Minister will visit Syria next week. The request by some Council members for continued consultations on the draft resolution is reasonable. It is regrettable that these reasonable concerns were not taken into account. To put through a vote when parties are still seriously divided over the issue does not help maintain the unity and authority of the Security Council nor help to properly resolve the issue. In this context, China voted against the draft resolution.

Syria is an important country in the Middle East. Peace and stability in Syria serve the common interests of the Syrian people and the international community. China will continue to work with the international community and to play a positive and constructive role in the proper settlement of the Syrian issue.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): Many congratulations, Mr. President, on assuming the post of Council President, and with such an important world issue at the very start of your tenure.

The problem in Syria has assumed dimensions that are not only regrettable but condemnable. We have to understand that while we have made civilization, we have also condoned expressions like "collateral damage", and so many others, which it is not my intention to name here today. But I believe that we accept too much too easily. It reminds me of when, two thousand years ago, Pontius Pilate washed his hands and said, "I have nothing to do with this." Two thousand years later, we still see that humanity suffers from that particular viewpoint.

Pakistan had some serious concerns, mainly against killings, the massacre of innocents. But also, on a point of principle of the Charter, we were not happy about any infringement on the sovereignty or integrity of Syria.

There was a very spirited attempt, as related by Sir Mark just now as well, to take care of issues and concerns, and we are thankful for that. I believe that it became important to be able to end killings by asking both sides — in fact, forcing both sides — to acknowledge that it is unacceptable, and based on the strong moral point that the Arab League draft introduced into this.

There was a question of amnesty. I also believe it was an accepted fact that everyone has to get involved

to stop it. Do not forget that nothing succeeds anywhere in the world against a government without external help. That is a point of history that cannot be ignored.

It is easy for those of us who today voted in the majority to sit back and say, "Well, we have done our bit." No, we have not. We cannot wash our hands of this. We must continue and seek — as the Russians and the Chinese have stated that they will continue to seek — the way forward. I believe that the best vehicle is the Arab League plan and the very substantial moves that have been accepted over the last few days.

I believe that the offer of no regime change, of plurality, and the promotion of democracy are important aspects of this situation. We have stood by that. I believe that even today our system has indeed let us down. We have been very clear, without taking political benefit out of it, that this aspect of the veto is always a heart-wrencher. It cuts both ways, benefitting one side at one moment and the other at another moment. Either everyone should have the veto, and then see how the world gets on, or perhaps we should all consider not using it whatsoever.

I also think we have arrived at a situation that demands we persevere in our efforts to strengthen the relationships among us. Today our decision mattered a great deal to our Arab brethren, who have been so important to us. We had to stand with them on principle because they wanted our support pretty unanimously. I raised a question a couple of days earlier, noting that I did not then see present either Tunisia, Egypt or others that are such strong proponents on this issue; and I am glad to see their presence today. That is a great plus, in my mind.

I would like to close with a few words of reminder that all this was done with good intentions on all sides. I am not going to beat anyone with a stick. I believe consensus was achieved, though there were some drop-outs from it, and I believe we can still work towards that consensus. There is a visit to Syria scheduled in the next few days. I am sure that some more points may arise.

This matter should not be allowed to die. The draft resolution should remain an active matter before this Council, and we should address it again as soon as possible, with the help even of those that decided today not to vote for it. By keeping the matter active, we would give hope to those who are expecting action

from us. Having made these few remarks, I urge the Council to keep its engagement on this matter alive.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): Let me start by congratulating you, Sir, and Togo on your assumption of the Council presidency for the month of February. Please be assured of South Africa's full support.

The world is watching with great concern as the crisis in Syria unfolds and degenerates by the day, claiming civilian lives and injuring and displacing many people, including children. As we have said before, we remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating political, security, socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Syria. It continues to deteriorate despite calls from the international community on the Syrian Government and the armed opposition to stop the violence and settle their differences in a peaceful manner. We condemn the violent loss of life in Syria and call for maximum of restraint from all parties to the conflict. We urge the parties to stop the violence immediately and commit themselves to finding a peaceful, political solution through a Syrian-led and owned, transparent and all-inclusive political process that will fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

The political process will guarantee, among other things, the people's fundamental political rights and freedoms and restore their dignity through the delivery of democracy, political reform, justice, human rights and socio-economic development. We believe that such a solution will indeed ensure long-term peace and stability. We regret the slow progress in the implementation of the reforms already announced, and encourage the Syrian Government to implement these reforms expeditiously. We urge the opposition to commit to fully participating in the implementation of these reforms.

South Africa believes that the efforts of the League of Arab States, as the organization with knowledge of and proximity to the situation in Syria, should be supported and given the necessary political space to find a solution to the Syrian crisis. South Africa supports the efforts of the League of Arab States to facilitate the Syrian-led political process, as stated in the draft resolution. It is important that the Syrian people be allowed to decide their own fate, including their future leadership.

Fundamentally, no foreign or external parties should interfere in Syria as its people engage in the

critical decision-making process on the future of their country. Any solution must preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We are also satisfied that the final draft resolution (S/2012/77) was not aimed at imposing regime change on Syria, which would be against the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

We sincerely hope that the Syrian Government and the opposition will continue to cooperate with the League of Arab States in its efforts to assist them to reach a peaceful political solution. We further call on the international community to render support to this process and refrain from actions and statements that may polarize the parties and delay, or even paralyse, the League of Arab States process.

The current political environment in the Middle East, a region whose geopolitics cannot afford to have a weak or conflict-ridden Syria, warrants us to act responsibly in the interest of regional and international peace and security. South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution today because we believe that it has the potential to help facilitate a Syrian-led political process and dialogue between the Syrian parties, and to bring long-term peace and stability to the country, in accordance with the aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan is deeply concerned at the continuing crisis and widespread violence in Syria that have resulted in the death of many people. Despite the repeated calls of the international community, the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, causing scores and deaths and injuries. Azerbaijan has from the very beginning supported the efforts of the League of Arab States, and is looking forward to their continuation with a view to ending the violence, overcoming the crisis and finding a solution by peaceful means and through dialogue.

The only solution to the crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process with the aim of effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of Syria's people, without external interference. This understanding is clearly expressed in the draft resolution (S/2012/77). It is crucial that obligations with respect to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Syria and all other States of the region be fully observed and respected. It is important that the draft resolution emphasizes that the current political crisis in Syria must be resolved peacefully, and notes that nothing

authorizes measures under Article 42 of the United Nations Charter.

Azerbaijan supported the draft resolution on the aforementioned understanding and with the hope that its adoption would contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at encouraging dialogue, overcoming the crisis and putting an end to human suffering.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Togo.

Togo had hoped that the situation that has prevailed in Syria for almost a year would allow the Security Council to send a strong message to the leaders and opposition in that country to end the violence and embark on a process of political negotiation that is inclusive and transparent. It was for that reason that Togo voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Morocco, and was a sponsor of the text. Unfortunately, the Council was not able to send this message to the Syrian political class, and my country deplores this state of affairs. Our Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, has failed once again to bring peace and security to Syria by speaking with a single voice.

Despite that failure, the Council should be able to continue to seek ways and means to bring peace to Syria. The Syrian people should not continue to suffer, cry and bury their dead as our Council remains impassive. The Security Council must act. Togo continues to believe that it is not too late for it to resolutely commit itself on the path of the necessary action that must be taken.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate your friendly country, Togo, and you yourself, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We wish you all success in that sensitive stewardship. I would also like to congratulate my colleague Ambassador Sangqu of South Africa on presiding over the Council for the past month.

I think that drawing inspiration from history in this Chamber is an extremely important exercise. Invoking examples from the cultures and literatures of peoples and nations is a critical experience. As I say this, I recall the literary masterpiece by the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe entitled *Faust*. It is a work that speaks in symbolic terms of the risks inherent in a person's — even a very wise one — selling his soul to Satan. That symbolic story summarizes the idea with which I would like to begin my statement, which is that a human being should not sell his or her soul to Satan in exchange for illusory gains that could destroy that person's hopes for freedom further down the road.

My delegation has examined the text of the draft resolution put before the Council. Given our firm belief in the pan-Arab principle, we had hoped that the examination of the question of Syria would have remained, first, exclusively within the Syrian household, and then in the larger supporting Arab household structure.

However, the rush by some parties to invite international intervention — and we know in advance what their objectives are in dealing with Arab issues, which are first and foremost the question of Palestine and the Israeli occupation of Arab territories — is a cause for concern. It is indeed a cause for sadness, deep sadness for the regrettable state of affairs in which we now find ourselves.

At this point, I would like to quote in English a sentence spoken some 22 years ago by former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark:

(*spoke in English*)

"The United Nations, which was created to prevent the scourge of war, has become an instrument of war."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

My delegation has followed with great appreciation the efforts by the advocates in the Council for human rights and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, especially the inadmissibility of intervention in the internal affairs of countries, of waging wars against countries to gain exclusive control of their geographic location and their lucrative natural resources, and of resolving the economic problems of the Western Powers at the expense of the peoples of developing nations. To those States that safeguard international peace and security, we express our deep

gratitude and appreciation, and the annals of history will record the noble positions they take.

Is it not strange that over a period of 45 years from its creation in 1945 to 1988 — the Security Council adopted only 690 resolutions, whereas in the following 20 years it adopted three times that number? That indicates that the current world is less secure, less just and less fair and that the provisions of the United Nations Charter are seriously threatened.

In this context, I would like to stress that the Syrian Arab Republic, a founding member of this world Organization, has been targeted by some Powers for punishment because of its commitment to international legal norms, especially on the issue of defending the human rights of peoples. Today, Syria is being sacrificed in a crisis manufactured by parties that do not want the best for Syria and its people. That is evident from their support — in funding, arms and favourable media coverage — for armed terrorist groups that kill, abduct and intimidate Syrian citizens and destroy and sabotage infrastructure, including power generation equipment, oil and gas pipelines, Ministry of Justice buildings and railroads.

Is there a sensible person who would believe that any government would commit massacres in any city on a day when the Security Council is scheduled to hold a meeting to examine the situation in that country? Would any entity put itself in such a position?

The most convincing proof of the criminal nature of those armed groups lies in the acts committed this very morning, which killed innocent people and destroyed homes as well as the buildings housing Syrian embassies in many capitals, all of that without any condemnation by the Secretary-General or the Council. The goal is to send a misleading message aimed at influencing the Council by swaying its decision-makers with respect to the draft resolution.

The best proof of our good intentions in our dealings with the League of Arab States is reflected in the contents of the report of the observers of the League of Arab States (see S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4). What is very strange is that Council members did not examine that report in due time, for reasons known to all of them. The report confirms that Syria has fulfilled its obligations under the protocol.

Here, and for the fourth time at least, let me stress that if the killing had ceased, if those who pay

lip service to democracy had ceased to implement their designs against Syria, if those States that provide generous funds — billions of dollars — and the most modern weapons and means of communication to the armed groups, hosting them in their capitals in order to facilitate their criminal acts against the Syrian people and their property, if they had ceased to do so, Syria would have fulfilled the League of Arab States plan of action and the relevant protocol under that plan.

Certain Arab Gulf States have dragged the League of Arab States to the Security Council, with a view to leveraging the Council's power against Syria and to internationalizing a purely Arab issue, contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the League of Arab States. That is in spite of the fact that since the beginning of the crisis, all of the Arab politicians in the League of Arab States have been competing among themselves to stress that they are not seeking the internationalization of the crisis in Syria.

The report of the observer mission that I mentioned earlier stresses that Syria has fulfilled its obligations despite the acts of violence. Let me quote here from the report:

"The mission noted that the Government strived to help it succeed in its task and remove any barriers that might stand in its way. The Government also facilitated meetings with all parties. No restrictions were placed on the movement of the mission and its ability to interview Syrian citizens, both those who opposed the Government and those loyal to it." (S/2012/71, annex, enclosure 4, para. 73)

About two and a half months ago, the Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite channel broadcast from Doha a political programme hosted by a well-known journalist. The two guests on that programme were the current President of Tunisia — who was not the President at that time — and a Syrian political activist. During that programme, its host said, addressing the current Tunisian President, "Do not ask me about my sources, but I have received information from the highest levels in Doha to the effect that the Syrian regime will change on 22 January" — that is, the very day on which the League of Arab States met in Cairo and took the decision to come before the Security Council.

It is indeed strange that the calls for reform, respect for human rights and the right to peaceful demonstration apply to Syria only, not to any other

State in the region, especially those that sponsored the draft resolution submitted against Syria. Some of the Arab States that sponsored the draft are the very same ones that prevented the Arab League from endorsing the integrated initiative submitted by Syria to the League of Arab States on bolstering the process of democracy, reform and human rights in all Arab States. That initiative included a demand for the issuing of a decision by the Council of the Arab League that would put forward a comprehensive Arab vision aimed at promoting democracy and reform in all Arab countries and fulfilling the aspirations of the masses in the areas of freedom; human rights; a multiparty system; freedom of information; fair and transparent elections; freedom of expression; the right of assembly and peaceful demonstration; and respect for the rights of minorities, alien residents and expatriate workers on their territory.

Is it rational that among the sponsors of the draft are States that prevent women from attending a soccer match? And those States are calling on Syria to be democratic?

Peaceful demonstration is a basic right guaranteed under Syrian law. The right to demand reform is the right of every Syrian citizen, and no one can deny that. But what no law can prevent and no State can accept is terrorism, chaos and the sabotaging of public and private property — the destabilization of a country. Every peaceful demonstrator, every person who calls for genuine reform aimed at safeguarding the Syrian homeland from major schemes and all those who seek dialogue as a way to resolve the crisis are not only welcome partners but key components of any effort to end the crisis in Syria as well as an integral part of reform and development in Syria.

The draft resolution which the Council failed to adopt today emphasizes the importance of the dialogue that has been mentioned here. We are in favour of such a dialogue and wish to see it continue and succeed. But those who wish to be parties to such a dialogue have refused to engage in dialogue openly, and the Security Council and the League of Arab States are fully aware of that. Also aware of that fact are those countries that have sought, and continue to seek, to host such a dialogue. This comes at a time when my country has agreed, in the Council, to undertake immediately a national, comprehensive dialogue that is inclusive of all parties, but under the auspices of the homeland. However, the other side, which has stonewalled the

undertaking of such a dialogue as a result of encouragement by some who wish to adopt dominating positions, has rejected dialogue and continues, even as we speak, to reject it.

It is our hope that the parties still supporting the opposition and armed groups — and those parties spoke about themselves, as some of my colleagues indicated in their statements — will sincerely advise their friends to foster a national dialogue, abandon all intentions to destroy Syria and to abandon all attempts to authorize outside military intervention. Indeed, they must join the ranks that will build Syria as it endeavours to renew itself.

Syria will enjoy security and stability as it always has. Syria will continue to be the homeland of tolerance and openness. Syria will remain the homeland of all Syrians, irrespective of their affiliations and political positions. There will be no majority and no minority. All of that will be developed on the ground in an initiative involving national ownership by the Syrian themselves and without external intervention. Syrians do not need to wait for lessons on democracy and human rights from Powers that deal with those lofty humanitarian concepts as if they were commodities to be traded speculatively on a stock exchange.

My colleague, the representative of the United States of America, said that she was disgusted at the use of the right of veto by two permanent members of the Security Council. I am not evaluating what she said. I respect her point of view. Nonetheless, I would like to ask her if her disgust also applies to the 60 vetoes that have been cast in this Chamber to prevent the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, the fair resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the settlement of the question of Palestine.

The statements made by some colleagues betray the true and genuinely hostile intentions of their countries towards the country, people and Government of Syria. All along, the tone of their statements has been undiplomatic, and their description of the Syrian Government as a regime is inconsistent with the principles of international law. They used inappropriate language to refer to the President of the State of Syria. It is only natural for us to say that the use of those words in this Chamber by some colleagues betrays their direct involvement in attempts to fan the flames

of violence, escalation and bloodshed in Syria and among Syrians. We do not accept any of that.

I do not wish to speak at length, but I would like to conclude my remarks by raising an important matter. Today, a journalist working for Al-Jazeera's English channel in London said on record that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar had instructed the channel to increase and intensify its coverage just hours before the convening of this meeting. I leave it to Council members to draw their own conclusions from the

political instructions given to that self-proclaimed news channel to falsely step up the pressure on the Security Council by claiming that massacres are being carried out in Syria.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.